

ULTIMO DRAGON! tears THE GREAT SASUKE! a new one! LOU THESZ! backdrop drivers SAKAGUCHI! KAKIHARA!! whomps ass!! And other stuff I saw this week!

Howdy!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #41~! I have a zillion tapes to watch (LOREFICE!!! HESHAM!! ROB FUCKIN NEWLAND!! Props to you all! Daps to you all!) But I've actually had a slow viewing week because I went to a cretin softball tournament in Fayetteville, NC where I had a fat old time and then came back and played more softball ringer-ing (tee-hee!) for a friend of mines Methodist team, so as you can guess I'm an absolute physical wreck- being that a man as potato-esque as I am should stay on the couch and watch BAYWATCH and NEVER attempt to run EVER again.... but watcha gonna do? I'm gonna break-up the tapes by match this week so it will look all experimental and shit.:) ON TO THE VIEWING!!!!

[ALL JAPAN CLASSICS/NEW JAPAN CLASSICS] (Samurai TV Dec 96)
DOUGGGGGGGGG!!!!!!

This is that classics show that makes me glad that I have to get tapes from Japan and don't have something like Samurai TV! in my house on my cable. I HAVE A WIFE and JOB to KEEP! and 24-hour wrestling channels would be VERY BAD for that. I've been watching this tape for WEEKS now and I finally sat down and just watched all of it at once- and GOOLLLLY! does some of this JUST WHIPS ASS!

ALL JAPAN June 1990

-Abdullah the Butcher vs Tiger Jeet Singh: This was about what you would expect- alot mayhem and blood. About what you usually get from Abdullah past 1988.

-Stan Hansen vs Toshiaki Kawada: Kawada looks and wrestles like Akiyama in this one- being the young punk of the moment back then. Hansen doesn't give him much, but Kawada gets in a few stiff kicks as harbinger of things to come.

-Steve Williams/ Terry Gordy sv Davey Boy Smith /Bam Bam Bigelow: I need to go back and watch this again. I just couldn't get into this for some reason. Probably just too many thick power wrestlers in one match at one time.:) HELL! At this point in time, all four of these were basically the same wrestler.

-Stan Hansen vs Steve Williams: HOLY CRAP! This was GREAT! Hansen at his peak with Williams reaching his peak. AWESOME psychology, AMAZING stiffness- breathtaking in scope and execution. Go watch this match if you've forgotten how GREAT Hansen was and how GREAT Doctor Death was. This danced between hell-raising brawl and fabulous wrestling match- two of the best ever kicking the holy crud out of each other- everything there is to love in a match. Hell yes.

1972.

-Shohei Baba vs the Sheikh: I much more spry Sheikh shows what a real heat-machine is as he gets Baba over as a face by cheating every way imaginable. Very 70's. Very American.

-Baba vs the Destroyer: This was the first Destroyer match I have seen since the first and last one I ever saw- the Destroyer Retirement Show. This was ALL JAPAN MID-ATLANTIC WRESTLING as it was EXACTLY like every Johnny Valentine vs George Two-Ton Harris match I ever saw as a seven year-old. The whole premise of the match was that Destroyer has Baba in a frontface lock and it keeps slipping into a choke and all the suspense of the ref finally figuring it out. Destroyer did a lot of pressure holds and wristlocks and other stuff that only Dean Malenko pulls out these days. Not NEARLY as boring as it sounds.

1/27/74

-Jack Brisco vs Dory Funk Jr.: This was- what?- seven hours long and pretty great. Two out of three falls with lots of Scientific Wrestling- which you gotta love. Dory Funk Jr was a lot more unorthodox than I remembered as I noticed he (and later on the tape Thesz) did things that looked strange because they would counter a roll-up or something of that sort with something that looked logical but- since everybody else would have cooperated in executing the move- it looked really innovative and neato. For instance, during a Boston Crab maybe he would go for the ankle of the guy who is trying to get it on him- since its a work you accept that you should go into a Boston Crab- thus the logical looks more innovative. Maybe you need to see it to understand.:)

1984.

-Harley Race vs Ric Flair: You're basic great Ric Flair match. Flair uses all the sleek yet basic moves that he was given from the Verne Gagne move set and makes them so much cooler hitting every move so cleanly and precisely. Harley Race wrestles as tough as nails as you remember he used to and he could definately hang with the Nature Boy in terms of selling and building to a great highspotless ending. This match was everything that you loved about a great MidSouth main event. In 84, Flair was at his physical peak and could actually go on the mat in an AWA sort of way and would use his body more than when his mike work finally hit its pinnacle around 86. Harley is a great lost wrestler already.

-Nick Bockwinkel vs Jumbo Tsuruta: This was the most surprising of all these matches. Jumbo Tsuruta proves that he was an all-time great by dragging the amazingly unspectacular Nick Bockwinkel to a great match. Tsuruta may not have invented the ALL JAPAN style of "the HELLISH bumps to start the nearfall bonanza that is interspersed with the cavalcade of finishers that make the match look like fight to the death", but he definately perfected it. EVERYTHING was going against this match- including a double ref bump and Nick frickin Bockwinkel in with Jumbo Tsuruta AND Terry Funk as a guest referee AND a screwy ending, but this kicked ass, this was great and Jumbo Tsuruta was a GREAT, GREAT wrestler.

NEW JAPAN

1973

-Inoki/Sakaguchi vs Johnny Powers/Pat Patterson. (L.A.): This Motherfucker never ends. YEESH! Johnny Powers is SO Don Kernoodlelike. The premise of the match is your basic RnR Express match- Inoki getting the hell kicked out of him by the lousy cheating Canadians and can't get the tag to Sakaguchi and vice versa- but without the cool highspots of the RnR Express. Pat Patterson does the oldschool bump and sell and act like a heel ninny. YEESH!

-Inoki/Sakaguchi vs Lou Thesz/ Karl Gotch: THIS kicked ASS! Lou Thesz FREAKING RULES IT in this match- hitting a friggin DANGEROUS BACKDROP DRIVER on Sakaguchi that was HIDEOUSLY Vertebrae-breaking. Inoki shows that he is the prototypical New Japan Heavyweight as he shitheadedly basically no-sells the same move in the third fall, jumps up and hits a drop kick. Karl Gotch is as goofy and great as you remember. All those euroSUPERmatGUYS wrestle like that and SOMEBODY should bring back the SnakePit style.
-Antonio Inoki vs Johnny Powers. NWF title: Lifes too short to watch two Johnny Powers matches in one sitting. I'll let you know about this one in a few weeks.:)

WAR-10/11-96 Osaka

LOREFICE!!!!

-Takashi Okamura vs Jun Kikuchi:I can't remember.

-Osamu Tachihikari vs Fukuda: ditto.

-Arashi/Masaaki Mochizuki vs Tatsumi Kitahara/Yuji Yasuraoka: This was basically what Lorefice said it was- It ruled Arashi sucks. Kitahara is the coolest WAR heavyweight because he kicks really hard. He's quite the poor man's Hashimoto. Mochizuki continues to be the fun wrestler wasted in WAR. A jump to FMW or WCW or something would do him a world of good. I love the "run-up-the-ropes-and-kick-him-in-the-head" thing he does. Yasuraoka is as good as he usually is- which is pretty dang good.

-Rey Misterio Jr vs Psicosis (WWA Welterweight Title): CRIMINY! This is the worst of the whole million match series between these two. The last WAR match had this feud threadbare and this pushes it over the top.

-Nobukazu Hirai/Nobutaka Araya vs Gedo/Jedo: HEY! HEY! ARAYA! Gedo/Jado bad.

-Great Sasuke vs Ultimo Dragon (J*Crown): The loopy, skull-fractured, highspot-addled Sasuke drops the multitude of straps to his superior rival. UD is kind and gentle in taking the straps and tries to keep Sasuke from killing himself this time. I'd like to see this match now- now that Sasuke is back to speed and UD still smokes everybody this side of Liger. About as good as can be expected. Weird child Dragon at the beginning is kinda spooky.

- Nobuhiko Takada/Naoki Sano/Masahito Kakahara vs Yoji Anjo/Ricky Fuyuki/Bam Bam Bigelow (WAR 6 Man Title): THIS KICKED ASS! Bigelow looked GREAT in that he was in the midst of getting ready for his ill-fated match with Kimo and was very agile, higher-impact and lighter than his WWF days. Everybody else in this was also great, except for the codger Fuyuki who still gets stud points for letting Kakahara punt his Gedo-loving face into next week. Anjo was great in this- especially when in with Takada- though Takada is Takada and tore him a shootstyle new one. Sano was at his most charitable, selling the goofy moves of Fuyuki- who wasn't adjusting to shootstyle murderers row across from him any more than Duggan would adjust well to a Lucha match. This FRIGGIN RULED. Go get it.

-Tenryu vs Great Muta: WAR is SO weird. This match SHOULD suck. Muta sucks. Tenryu is older than the Earth itself. Neither need to work at all to get over, so of course this match was pretty good. I can't understand it. Good build-up to the end, lots of nearfalls, fun brawling, neat staredowns, green mist, dragonscrews- I dunno; it worked. Yeah, get this tape.

NEXT WEEK (Hopefully!): All the stuff I got in this week! UWF! Liger! More Lou Thesz! Bruiser Brodie!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, Missing Bruiser Brodie since that rat bastard stabbed him.

e-mail: The Tape Trader

Go READ A QUEBRADA! ITS GOOD!